

EXCISE

RECD APR 2, 1979 OCS

SUBJECT: Report of Official Travel

PROJECT OFFICER: Mr. William G. Courtney

DATE OF TDY: 16 - 17 Mar 1979

PLACE OF TDY: San Francisco CA

PURPOSE OF TDY: To visit [REDACTED] in order to correct
error made in releasing wrong remains [REDACTED] b6

INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Mr. Don Morris, Agent in Charge,
Department of State Field
Office, San Francisco CA

Mr. David A. Botsko, Special Agent,
Department of State Field
Office, San Francisco CA

Mr. Mike Silva, Passport Office,
Department of State Field
Office, San Francisco CA

On 14 Mar 79 I was contacted by Col Taylor, AF/MPXJ, who advised me that through administrative error, two deceased had duplicating numbers and that one of the deceased had been released to the NOK. Upon investigation it was determined that the wrong remains had been released (Atch 1 and 2).

Col Taylor and I discussed how this could have occurred and what should be done now to rectify the situation. I recommended that the NOK who received the wrong remains be contacted as soon as possible and in person. I suggested that notification be carried out by at least two representatives from Department of State (DOS). I felt it appropriate for DOS to do this as they were the officials responsible for contacts with the families and in obtaining disposition of remains.

Col Taylor indicated that State may not wish to do this. We agreed that it could be placed in our (DOD) laps due to it being our (AFIP) mistake. In this regard, Col Taylor brought up the possibility of me being tasked with the responsibility. I asked that this be considered only if DOS refuses and there are no other options.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY W. G. Courtney DATE 3/2/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

ATCH

On 15 Mar I was notified by Capt LeBeouf, AF/MPXJ, that DOD would have to assist the DOS in making the notification to the NOK (Atch 3). I was asked to proceed to California on Friday, 16 Mar, and meet with Mr. Don Morris, DOS, who would work with me in contacting the NOK.

I called Mr. Morris to discuss my arrival and to set up some preliminary plans. Mr. Morris was not at all familiar with the agreement reached between DOS and Office of Secretary of Defense, General Council (GC). Mr. Morris advised me that he would have to contact his HQ and call me back. I relayed this information back to Capt LeBeouf.

I received a call later that evening at home from Mr. Morris. He informed me that his HQ advised him that he is not to participate as they were not aware of any of the arrangements made by DOS and OSD/GC. However, he has arranged for my accommodations and will have someone meet me at the airport.

On 16 Mar I advised Capt LeBeouf of the above and departed for San Francisco. I was met upon arrival by Mr. David Botsko, DOS Special Agent. We went directly to the Federal Building where I met with Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris informed me that he still had not received instructions from Washington that he was to assist me in any way. I showed him a copy of the letter giving me my authority and instructions. While he placed a call to Mr. DiPlacido, DOS, Washington DC, Special Agent Botsko and I went down to the FBI office to review their files on this family. This was done in order to find out more about the NOK and his family.

I was able to review the interview of the one surviving sister of the deceased and in doing so satisfied myself that there was no apparent Peoples Temple connection with the NOK. Although not much was learned about the NOK, I was satisfied that there wasn't any potential problem.

Upon return to Mr. Morris' office he advised me that he had been instructed not to assist me in any way. To put it mildly, I was strictly on my own and would have to arrange any transportation, security, etc., on my own. It was learned, however, that someone in the passport section would be tasked to assist me.

Mr. Mike Silva, passport office, was tasked (he was the only one left in the office). I briefed Mr. Silva on the purpose of the visit. He was not aware of the details and had been instructed to accompany me only. In other words, sit tight

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and let me do the talking, which is exactly what happened. I rented a car and Mr. Silva and I proceeded to Oakland. I called [redacted] from a phone booth and made arrangements to visit with him.

[redacted] was suspicious of my call, but was very gracious to allow our visit. We arrived at his residence at 1810. I introduced myself and Mr. Silva. I then proceeded to explain the purpose of my visit. [redacted] had few questions and seemed to understand very well what had happened.

[redacted] advised me that he had his daughter and step-daughter cremated by [redacted]. Their ashes were then sent to the [redacted].

I asked [redacted] what he desired us to do now. I assured him that we would assist him in every way possible. [redacted] stated he assumed State would pay for any expenses. If so, he would desire cremation by [redacted] and the forwarding of the cremains to the [redacted]. I advised Mr. Puraley that State would pay for the removal from Dover to [redacted] cremation charges, shipment of the cremains to California and the scattering of the ashes. [redacted] was very satisfied that this would be done.

[redacted] showed me the statements he had for his expenses for his two daughters. He forwarded to [redacted] \$347.75 for their charges. He paid [redacted] \$4.00 for permits and \$50.00 for the scattering. I assured [redacted] that we would keep him informed. He asked to be notified when the cremation takes place and the cremains are shipped to California.

I gave [redacted] my local address in case he wished to call me. I also offered to call him prior to my departure. He suggested he call me as he is in and out constantly.

[redacted] was emotional and had to excuse himself during our conversation. However, he expressed his understanding and appreciation for the personal visit.

Upon return to my quarters I contacted Capt LeBeouf and advised him of the outcome of my visit. He agreed that there was no further need for me to stay in San Francisco.

On 17 Mar I made several attempts to contact [REDACTED] prior to my departure. I was unable to reach him. I did leave my name and duty phone number with him and asked that he call me if I can assist him in any way.

COMMENTS: I feel that the DOS did not fulfill their responsibility in this matter. Regardless of who made the mistake or why, I still feel that State as the focal point for NOK contact since the beginning of the Guyana operation, should have taken a larger role. I cannot emphasize my disappointment with their lack of support and apparent lack of compassion for the deceased's family.

William G. Courtney
WILLIAM G. COURTNEY
Chief, Air Force Mortuary
Services
Casualty Matters

3 Atch

1. Talker, AF/MPXJ dtd
15 Mar 79 (Chronological Events)
2. Talker, AF/MPXJ dtd
15 Mar 79
3. AF/MPXJ Ltr, 16 Mar 79